

man (although but an agent) and carried a high hand at Philadelphia.

At Montreal was another Franks—David Solesbury Franks—also in the business of army contractor. He was a gay young man, described as "a blooded buck," who knew all the arts of turning an honest penny out of the needs of armies and the distress of nations. This young man was a grandson or grand nephew of the Moses Franks of England, as he was a nephew of the David Franks of Philadelphia.

Here and there were other Franks, all intent on business with the non-Jewish government, but the four here mentioned carry along the main parts of the tale.

A moment's digression will give us at once a view of the looseness of the liberalism of some of the Fathers of the Country, and a view of the equanimity with which David Franks, of Philadelphia, could pass from one rôle to another—a facility which cost him dearly when war came on.

A Side Light on the Early Times

JOHN TRUMBULL, an artist of considerable note at the time, whose paintings still adorn the National Capitol, was invited to dine at Thomas Jefferson's home, among the guests being Senator Giles, from Virginia. Trumbull tells the story:

"I was scarcely seated when Giles began to rally me on the Puritanical ancestry and character of New England. I saw there was no other person from New England present, and, therefore, although conscious that I was in no degree qualified to manage a religious discussion, I felt myself bound to defend my country on this delicate point as well as I could. Whether it had been prearranged that a debate on the Christian religion, in which it should be powerfully ridiculed on the one side and weakly defended on the other, was to be brought forward as promising amusement to a rather free-thinking dinner party, I will not presume to say, but it had that appearance, and Mr. Giles pushed his raillery, to my no small annoyance, if not to my discomfiture, until dinner was announced.

"That I hoped would relieve me by giving a new turn to the conversation, but the company was hardly seated at table when he renewed the assault with increased asperity, and proceeded so far at last as to ridicule the character, conduct and doctrines of the Divine Founder of our religion; Mr. Jefferson in the meantime smiling and nodding approval on Mr. Giles, while the rest of the company silently left me and my defense to our fate, until at length my friend David Franks took up the argument on my side. Thinking this a fair opportunity for avoiding further conversation on the subject, I turned to Mr. Jefferson and said, 'Sir, this is a strange situation in which I find myself; in a country professing Christianity and at a table with Christians, as I supposed, I find my religion and myself attacked with severe and almost irresistible wit and raillery, and not a person to aid in my defense but my friend Mr. Franks, who is himself a Jew.'"

This episode throws a curious light on the character of Thomas Jefferson's "philosophical unbelief," the unlovely fashion of that day; it also illustrates a certain facility in David Franks.

Relations between the Colonies and the Mother Country became strained. Political feelings ran high. The lines of division between "American" and "British" began to appear for the first time. At first there was a degree of agreement among all the population, except the government officials, that a protest against governmental abuses was justified and that strong representations should be made in behalf of the Colonists. Even loyalists and imperialists agreed with that. It was a question of domestic politics. But when presently the idea of protest began to develop into the idea of rebellion and independence, a cleavage came. It was one thing to correct the Empire, another thing to desert it. Here is where the people of the Colonies split.

The Franks Family Caught by War

MR. JACOB FRANKS in royalist and loyalist New York, was, of course, royalist and loyalist. As army contractor for the British Government, he had no choice.

Mr. David Franks, down in Philadelphia, was a little nearer the heart of the new American sentiment, and could not be so royal and loyal as was his kinsman north. In fact, David Franks tried to do what is modernly called "the straddle," attempting to side with the Empire and with the Colonies, too.

It was natural. His business was in Philadelphia. He may also have wished to remain as long as possible in the position of a spy, and send information of the state of public feeling to the royalists. Moreover, he was received in good society and his reputation for wealth and shrewdness won him attentions he could not otherwise have commanded.

So, in 1765 we find him joining the merchants of Philadelphia in the pact not to import articles from England while the hated Stamp Act was in force. In

1775 he favors the continuance of the colonial currency.

He was enjoying his accustomed life in the city—and his acquaintance with the Shippen family into which the dashing young Benedict Arnold married.

There is a strange intermingling of all the tragic figures of the play: Benedict Arnold marries the girl for whom Major André wrote a parlor play. Major André, during his period of captivity as an American prisoner of war and before his exchange, was often at the home of David Franks. And David Solesbury Franks, at his post as agent of the Franks syndicate at Montreal, is placed by a strange turn of the wheel of destiny in the military family of Benedict Arnold for a considerable period preceding and including the great treason.

So, for the moment let us leave the Jewish family of Franks—all of them still stationed as we first described them: Moses in England, Jacob at New York, David at Philadelphia, David S. at Montreal—and let us scrutinize the young American officer, Benedict Arnold.

These facts would most of them be lost, had they not been preserved in the Jewish archives, by the American Jewish Historical Society. You will read any history of Benedict Arnold without perceiving the Jews around him. The authors of the accepted histories were blind.

Benedict Arnold Heads Toward His Fate

THE principal defect in Benedict Arnold's character was his love of money. All of the trouble which led up to the situation in which he found himself with reference to the American Government and Army, was due to the suspicion which hung like a cloud over many of his business transactions. There have been attempts to paint Arnold as a dashing martyr, as one who was discouraged by the unmerited slights of the Continental Congress, as a victim of the jealousy of lesser men, as one from whom confidence was unjustly withheld. Nothing could be further from the fact. He was a man to whom men were instinctively drawn to be generous, but so general was the knowledge of his looseness in money matters that, while admiring him, his brother officers acted upon the protective instinct and held aloof from him. He was tainted by a low form of dishonesty before he was tainted with treason, and the chief explanation of his treason was in the hard bargain he drove as to the amount of money he was to receive for his guilty act.

Arnold's own record makes this clear. Let us then take up his career at a certain point and see how the Franks strand and the money strand weave themselves through it like colored threads.

Extraordinary efforts have been made in recent years to extenuate Arnold's treason by the recital of his daring services. These services need not be minimized. Indeed, it was his great achievement of the winter march to Montreal and Quebec in 1775-6 that seems to begin the chapter of his troubles. To rehearse this feat of courage and endurance would be to tell a tale that has thrilled the American schoolboy.

Arnold's First Alliance With the Jews

IT WAS at Montreal that Benedict Arnold came into contact with the young Jew, David Solesbury Franks, the Canadian agent of the Franks army-purveying syndicate. And the next thing known about young Franks is that he returns to the American Colonies in the train of Benedict Arnold as an officer of the American Army.

How this change was effected is not explained in any of the records. There is a moment of darkness, as it were, in which the "quick change" was made, which transformed the young Montreal Jew from an army contractor for the British into an officer of Benedict Arnold's staff.

But as it is impossible for every fact to be suppressed, there are here and there indications of what might have been, what indeed most probably was, the basis of the attraction and relation between the two. It was very probably—almost certainly—the opportunities for graft which could be capitalized by a combination of General Arnold's authority and young Franks' ability in the handling of goods.

From the day they met in Montreal until the hour when General Arnold fled, a traitor, from the fort on the Hudson, young David Solesbury Franks was his companion.

In one of the numerous court-martials which tried General Arnold for questionable dealings in matters pertaining to army supplies, Franks, who was aid-de-camp to Arnold, and by rank of major, testified thus:

"I had, by being in the army, injured my private affairs very considerably, and meant to leave it, if a proper opportunity of entering into business should happen. I had several conversations on the subject with General Arnold, who promised me all the assistance in his power; he was to participate in the profits of the business I was to enter in."

This testimony was given by Major Franks in

1779; the two men had met in the winter of 1775-1776, but, as the records will show, Major Franks was always General Arnold's reliance on getting out of scrapes caused by questionable business methods in which Arnold's military authority, was used quite freely. Major Franks admits that he was to enter business and General Arnold was to share the profits. On what basis this arrangement could exist, is another point not known. Arnold had no capital. He had no credit. He was a spendthrift, a borrower, notorious for his constant need of money. The only credible inducement for Franks to accept a partnership with him was on the understanding that Arnold should use his military authority to throw business to Franks. Or, to state it more bluntly, the "profits" which Benedict Arnold was to receive were payments for his misuse of authority for his own gain.

A complete opening of the records will show this to be the most reasonable view of the case.

Arnold's First Public Disgrace

IT WAS at Montreal that Benedict Arnold's name first became attainted with rumors of shady dealing in private and public property. General George Washington had laid down the most explicit instructions on these matters, with a view to having the Canadians treated as fellow-Americans and not as enemies. General Washington had cashiered officers and whipped soldiers who had previously disobeyed the order against looting and theft.

General Arnold had seized large quantities of goods at Montreal and had hurried them away without making proper account of them. This he admits in his letter to General Schuyler: "Our hurry and confusion was so great when the goods were received, it was impossible to take a particular account of them." This means only that Arnold seized the goods without giving the Canadian citizens proper receipts for them, so that he had in his hands a large amount of wealth for which he was under no compulsion to account to anybody. This mass of goods he sent to a Colonel Hazen at Chambley, and Colonel Hazen evidently aware of the conditions under which the goods were taken, refused to receive them. This disobedience of Colonel Hazen to his superior officer, especially in a question relating to goods, made it necessary for Arnold to take some self-protective action, which he did in his letter to General Schuyler. Meantime a very ugly rumor ran through the American Army that General Benedict Arnold had tried to pull a scurvy trick of graft, but had been held up, by the strict conduct of Colonel Hazen. Moreover, it was rumored (and the fact was admitted by Arnold in his letter) that in the transfer the goods were well sorted over so that when they finally arrived a great part of them was missing. All the principal facts were admitted by Arnold, who used them, however, to throw blame on Colonel Hazen. He even went so far as to prefer charges against Colonel Hazen, forcing the matter into a court-martial. The court was called and refused to hear the witnesses chosen by General Arnold in his behalf, on the ground that the witnesses were not entitled to credibility. Whereupon General Arnold flouted the court, who ordered him arrested. General Gates, to preserve the useful services of Arnold to the United States Army, dissolved the court-martial, to that extent condoning the conduct of Arnold. Before the court-martial dissolved, however, it informally acquitted Colonel Hazen with honor.

Setting the Stage for Treason

HERE, then, almost immediately, as it would seem, upon his new connection with David Solesbury Franks, Benedict Arnold is involved in a bad tangle concerning property which had come into his possession irregularly and which disappeared soon after. His attempt to throw the blame on an officer whose disobedience was the factor that disclosed the true state of affairs, failed. It was his bold scheme to forestall an exposure which must inevitably have come.

While it is true that on this Montreal case, no verdict stands recorded against Benedict Arnold for the theft of goods, it is also true that the American Army became suspicious of him from that day.

Had Benedict Arnold been innocent then and had he kept his hands clean thereafter, the Montreal episode would have been forgotten. But as a matter of fact such affairs came with increasing frequency thereafter, all of them, strangely enough, involving also the Jew whom he associated with himself at the time of that first exposure.

The story of this Jew's relations with Benedict Arnold all through the period ending with the great treason, may now be taken up with greater consecutiveness, for now their formerly separate courses run together. In another article this relationship and all that it meant will be illustrated from the government records.